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Evaluation

Evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP
Executive summary

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I. Introduction

A. Rationale

1. At its second regular session 2002, the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA recommended that the UNDP Evaluation Office undertake a global evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP. The Administrator reported to the Executive Board at its 2004 annual session that the Evaluation Office had initiated an independent evaluation.[1] The interest of the Board coincided with a need on the part of UNDP to gauge the effectiveness of its approach and validate the results of past efforts in gender mainstreaming and advancing gender equality.

2. The present report provides a summary of the findings of that evaluation, which was carried out by a multidisciplinary team between December 2004 and June 2005.

B. Objectives

3. In accordance with the terms of reference and the management response to the report 'Transforming the Mainstream: Gender in UNDP' (DP/2004/31), the evaluation had the following objectives:

(a) to take stock of what UNDP has done to install gender mainstreaming policies and ensure their implementation; and

(b) to assess the overall performance of UNDP in gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality.

4. The evaluation is a forward-looking, lesson-learning exercise as well as an assessment of results. Recognizing past experience, it suggests practical next steps for future progress towards gender mainstreaming, specifically, ensuring that the 'engendering' of UNDP development activities is visible and explicit and contributes towards gender-equitable development.

C. Concepts and methodology

What is gender mainstreaming?

5. Following the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), development organizations adopted 'gender mainstreaming' as a strategy for ensuring the incorporation of gender perspectives in all areas and sectors, and at all levels, to promote gender equality. The strategy would consider both women and men as actors in and beneficiaries of development – and the definition and delimitation of their rights and entitlements relative to each other.

6. The objective is clear, but there are problems with the concept in practice – in fact, the evaluation found widespread confusion within UNDP about what 'gender' means and how to make it part of the operations of the organization. Some equated 'gender mainstreaming for human development' with gender equality in human resources management; for others, 'gender' was merely another way of saying

[1] DP/2004/31, Management response to the report "Transforming the Mainstream: Gender in UNDP".

'women' – adding an activity for women to a project, or counting how many women have benefited.

7. Like 'gender', 'mainstreaming' does not translate easily into most other languages. In English, the term is nowadays applied so widely that it is perhaps losing meaning.

8. It is important to make a clear distinction between gender mainstreaming and its goal, which is to support gender equality in UNDP human development work. Effective gender mainstreaming should result in development that both enhances gender equality and removes gender-related impediments to social, economic, and environmentally sound development. This goal is not always made explicit, with the result that gender mainstreaming risks becoming a technical approach without clear direction and targets.

9. Gender analysis has a political dimension. The inequality and injustice of gender relations is a concern for human rights, and thus for sustainable development: the gender approach places the continuing subordination of women in context.

10. The evaluation used the following definition of gender mainstreaming (ECOSOC 1997/2), adopted corporately by UNDP:

> ...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

11. The evaluation therefore addressed itself to the range of UNDP work, including corporate and institutional policy; its contribution to shaping national and international development policy; and its regional and country programmes. Gender mainstreaming implies that UNDP should:

(a) ensure that gender analysis is an integral part of all its activities;

(b) make support for gender equality a key element of its policy dialogue with partners; and

(c) develop strategies to ensure its capacity for gender mainstreaming, including policy-making, expertise, and human and financial resources.

12. Gender mainstreaming strategy does not preclude targeted, women-focused interventions, but provides the strategic framework in which they operate.

Scope and approach

13. The scope of this evaluation includes: the extent to which UNDP has mainstreamed gender to promote gender equality in policies and programming; UNDP capacity for gender mainstreaming; leadership and management of the gender mainstreaming process; advocacy and partnerships; monitoring and reporting; and financial and human resources. The focus is on assessing the main achievements and shortcomings of UNDP in order to make recommendations for strengthening gender mainstreaming.

14. The evaluation examined implementation in the field; knowledge generation and dissemination at headquarters; and policies and leadership at the corporate level. The team met with a variety of stakeholders and partners within and outside UNDP.

Methods

15. The evaluation used a variety of approaches and data sources, allowing the team to triangulate its research and arrive at robust findings:

(a) A preliminary review of UNDP documents.

(b) Visits to 14 countries: interviews and focus groups with staff; donors; governments; community based organizations; women's organizations, and academia. For each country a background report was provided by a national consultant.[2]

(c) An electronic survey of 166 country offices, 98 of which responded.

(d) Interviews at headquarters with Executive Board members and with staff of UNDP and other United Nations organizations.

D. Limitations

16. UNDP gender mainstreaming policies lack clear objectives, targets and time frames, making it difficult to quantify progress. The time allowed for the evaluation was insufficient to assess the effects and impact of gender mainstreaming within country-level projects and programmes. Instead, the evaluation assessed the attention accorded to gender relations in country-level policies, programmes, and institutional measures.

II. Context

The global context

17. The 2005 Report of the Secretary-General[3] points out the gains for women in the ten years since the Fourth World Conference for Women, notably: more women parliamentarians; narrowing of gender gaps in education; more women in the workforce; lower fertility rates; greater attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights, violence against women and inequality of power in gender relations. The report notes, however, that public attitudes have lagged behind policy.

18. Furthermore, there has been some backlash from those who assert 'traditional' gender roles, and setbacks on a number of fronts, including a multilateral framework weakened by militarism and wars. Policymakers are increasingly shifting their focus to security and defence, often ignoring the needs of poor people, even as women confront greater challenges. These range from the impact of HIV/AIDS to that of conflicts and post-conflict environments that put women at risk, and reconstruction

[2] The 14 countries visited were: Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Swaziland. The visits were preceded by a pilot visit to Trinidad and Tobago in September 2004.

[3] "Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century', Report of the Secretary-General". E/CN.6/2005/2.

measures that frequently marginalize them. The effects of HIV/AIDS can be devastating to women, who are the most vulnerable group in the poorest countries.

19. Globalization has created more jobs for women, but with attendant risks, including the removal of some protections usually offered by formal employment. The ever-growing level of trafficking for sexual purposes is one manifestation of the risks of globalization.

20. Nevertheless, the growing acceptance of a normative international framework and standards for women's empowerment has the potential to promote gender equality. UNDP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) were among the early advocates of gender mainstreaming: today, most international development partners and donors are committed to it. Among significant advances, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Summit in September 2005 placed women's empowerment and gender equality at the centre of development concerns.

The UNDP institutional context

21. In gender as in other areas of development, the comparative advantage of UNDP lies in its reputation among governments as a reliable partner, and within civil society as an 'honest broker'. Many stakeholders consider UNDP a legitimizing partner, proposing internationally accepted values and norms. UNDP also has particular responsibilities – for example, in regard to the MDGs – from which it derives the obligation and the opportunity to promote gender equality.

22. UNDP has undergone continuous reorganization during the past decade. Starting in 1999, UNDP redesigned its programme management and monitoring systems, introducing mechanisms such as the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) reports and the Atlas accounting system. Focus on stronger cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system has had particular implications for UNDP as the lead coordinating organization.

Important UNDP policy decisions on gender mainstreaming
1987: First Gender in Development Division created
1992: Gender in Development Division converted into Women in Development (WID) programme within the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) to promote gender equality and empowerment of women in UNDP, provide guidance on gender policy, and advance gender as cross-cutting theme
1994: Gender balance in management policy (1995-1997)
1996: Administrator's *Direct Line 11* to all Resident Representatives directs 10 per cent of global programming and 20 per cent of regional programming to gender mainstreaming and advancement of women
1998: Gender balance in management policy, phase 2 (1998-2001)
2000: Gender becomes a strategic goal within UNDP strategic results framework and a cross-cutting issue in the six practice areas
2001: UNIFEM Executive Director designated champion of gender equality in UNDP "in her personal capacity"

2003: Gender balance in management policy (2003-2006)
2004: Gender equality becomes a driver of development effectiveness and a service line within the strategic goal of achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty (MYFF 2004-2007)
2004: UNIFEM Executive Director designated Special Adviser to the Administrator on gender
2004: UNDP institutes gender and diversity scorecard to measure and monitor effectiveness of UNDP gender balance in personnel policy
June 23, 2005: Executive Board adopts the UNDP corporate gender strategy and action plan prepared by the gender unit, urging UNDP to "further expand its work on gender mainstreaming, including through the increase of financial and human resources to support the implementation of the action plan".

III. Findings

A. Policies and priorities, 1996-2005

23. The story of gender mainstreaming policies in UNDP is one of good starts and lost momentum – or what one might call 'policy evaporation': intermittent declarations (see chronology above) and mixed signals.

24. The term 'gender mainstreaming' came into widespread use after the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. A November 1996 memorandum from the Administrator restated UNDP commitment to gender equality and earmarked significant resources and staff positions for the purpose: UNDP was to direct 20 per cent of global programming and 20 per cent of regional programming to gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women, with improvements in staff capacity. However, the directives established no tracking mechanisms, and apparently the policy was not properly or evenly implemented.

25. The memorandum provided for gender-in-development advisors on a pilot basis; training of gender focal points (GFPs) in all country offices, along with key government and non-governmental organization (NGO) staff; and an interactive electronic research and learning network that still exists. Most of these measures were implemented.

26. UNDP adopted the 1997 definition of gender mainstreaming by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and in 1998 the concept of 'sustainable human-centred development' set the framework for its policy and programmes, with the advancement of women as one of five focus areas. However, under pressure to cut costs and increase efficiency, the 2000-2003 Business Plans reoriented UNDP as a 'knowledge-based' organization, giving priority to advocacy and upstream policy advice. It also narrowed the focus from six thematic areas of focus to five practice areas, and 'gender equality' became a cross-cutting theme.

27. The 16 August 2001memorandum of Administrator to United Nations Resident Coordinators reaffirmed that gender equality remained a core commitment and informed Resident Coordinators of several steps to operationalize it. In the same memorandum, the Administrator appointed the Director of UNIFEM as UNDP champion on gender in her personal capacity, underlining that "...this does not mean that UNDP is abdicating its responsibility to mainstream gender".

28. However, the budget allocated to the global gender programme 2000-2004 was $1.5 million, a fifth of the earlier $7.7 million budget. This, together with the thrust of the Business Plans, seemed to imply that UNDP could leave gender mainstreaming to UNIFEM. UNDP staff may have assumed from these changes that gender mainstreaming was no longer a priority.

29. In 2002, BDP issued a gender equality policy note describing effective entry points for advancing gender equality. However, its messages were probably diluted by the failure of UNDP to emphasize gender mainstreaming or the promotion of gender equality as priorities in its change management process. Although gender mainstreaming was considered to apply to all UNDP work, placement of the gender unit within the poverty practice area (see below) suggested otherwise.

30. The concept of integrating gender throughout UNDP work was restored by the MYYF for 2004-2007, with four questions relating to the 'gender driver' for reporting purposes, establishing gender equality as a driver of development effectiveness. In addition, gender mainstreaming became a service line (1.6) under poverty and the achievement of the MDGs.

31. The Executive Board requested a corporate gender strategy and action plan, for which the gender unit submitted a revised version in April 2005. The plan includes focusing on country offices in developing new UNDAFs, and training. On 23 June 2005 the Board adopted the plan, also urging UNDP to "further expand its work on gender mainstreaming, including through the increase of financial and human resources to support the implementation of the action plan" and requesting that the Administrator "develop the gender action plan through 2007, including the results matrix, and taking into account the findings of the multi-year funding framework ... as well as the findings of the ongoing independent evaluation ...".

B. Institutional structure

The gender unit

32. The various structures for implementing gender mainstreaming policies have reflected the attitude of UNDP towards gender mainstreaming. Management has moved the structures around, creating ambiguity and decreased visibility, and has allocated insufficient staff and financial resources.

33. When BDP was established in 2000, it comprised six practice areas: poverty, governance, energy and environment, HIV/AIDS (since 2001), information and communication technology, and crisis prevention and recovery. The gender unit was located within the Bureau for Development Policy under the poverty group and provided guidance on gender policy and programmes, and on advancing gender as a cross-cutting theme.

34. While this location highlighted the importance of gender for addressing poverty, it also suggested that gender was not mainstreamed across all practice areas. The gender unit was relocated in 2004 to report directly to the BDP Director, implying that its remit covers all the practice areas. Of the five gender unit staff members, only two held UNDP contracts in early 2005.

Gender advisors and gender focal points at regional and country levels

35. UNDP has a gender advisor in six of its regional service centres. They are very active in providing advice to country offices, organizing trainings and

producing manuals and handbooks, and they play an important role in 'engendering' regional activities. But they have little authority or control over follow-up and are overstretched, having to deal with many countries. At the country level and at headquarters, UNDP has adopted the system of gender focal points (GFPs). The role of GFPs tends to be ambiguous and ill-defined. In the country offices they are variously expected to be sources of expertise, contact persons for headquarters, collectors of gender- and women-related information, and internal advocates. They often lack a clear job description, and colleagues have little understanding of their role. Too often, GFPs are junior, paid through 'soft', temporary funding, with the gender portfolio added on to their other responsibilities. All this notwithstanding, there are a few countries where the capacity of the GFP has been scaled up successfully.

Guidance and capacity building

36. The gender unit has issued guidance notes, and in 2004 produced a substantial report, *Transforming the Mainstream: Gender in UNDP*. The BDP practice areas have generated gender mainstreaming documents and toolkits; there is an Internet information resource and discussion forum (GenderNet) and a new country-based system of knowledge management networks, which will draw on government, civil society and academic expertise, as well as the United Nations system and donors.

37. Guidance is also available in person from the BDP gender unit, sectoral practice areas and regional bureaux, regional gender advisors, gender experts from other United Nations organizations, and national experts.

38. However, staff have no incentive beyond their own interest and initiative to use these resources, just as there are no rewards or penalties for taking or neglecting training opportunities.

39. Policies and mandates are without effect if UNDP staff do not understand gender, or lack the skills to mainstream gender in their work. One of the most disappointing aspects of UNDP gender mainstreaming has been its limited attempts to build understanding among the staff through formal training, mentoring or evaluation. A targeted initiative was terminated in 2001 for budgetary reasons and no centrally-run training has been offered since. An online training module has been partially successful, and a new initiative will be launched at the end of 2005.

40. There has been some effective training at the regional and country levels, though many of the programmes are too general and lack focused expertise on mainstreaming gender in different practice areas.

41. In some countries, government and civil society have better knowledge on gender issues and are more proactive than UNDP. There are national gender experts in many countries, who have the added advantage of understanding the local context. Such expertise is too often overlooked and underutilized.

Monitoring and reporting

42. Two recent processes, the gender mapping exercise and the gender driver questions in the MYFF, mark an improvement in attempts on the part of UNDP to institute monitoring and reporting of gender mainstreaming and gender equality-focused programming.

43. However, effective monitoring requires that information be assimilated and digested; imply results for those reporting (such as additional funding for

demonstrated commitment) and form the basis of discussion, research, technical support, or sharing of lessons learned. By those standards, UNDP remains ineffective, both globally and at the country level.

Financial resources

44. The evaluation could not make firm estimates of UNDP resource allocation to gender, because much information is missing, incomplete or inconsistent. No information on gender allocations through country office programmes is centrally available; and while it is relatively easy to identify and quantify expenditures on programmes specifically targeted to 'women' or 'gender', UNDP methodologies preclude estimating the expenditures on programmes that include attention to gender mainstreaming.

45. These difficulties indicate the need for a systematic definition and review of expenditure on gender-related activities, and belie the notion that achievements can be measured either in terms of activities (the MYFF) or expenditure (Atlas).

46. Reviewing expenditure in terms of staff resources, it appears that UNDP has actually reduced its support for gender mainstreaming. The 5-member gender unit is seriously understaffed. Before 2000 it had six staff and its own operational budget. Since the 2000 reorganization, the unit has relied on the global programme for staffing costs, and has to raise all the funds needed for operational programmes. From 2001-2003, for example, the Global Cooperation Framework provided $1.5 million to the gender unit as seed money for country offices, and for specific global programmes to build knowledge, develop tools and support regional bureaux and Regional Service Centres. In addition, the unit manages the Japan WID fund earmarked for women's economic empowerment programmes.

47. Funds for gender-related activities are included in some of the thematic trust funds. Atlas 2004 shows an expenditure of some $8.4 million in 2004 for gender mainstreaming approved by BDP, of which $3.1 million were core resources (see annex 5 of unabridged report). A recent Netherlands contribution to the gender thematic trust fund set up in 2001 has enabled the gender unit to support the development of gender mainstreaming strategies in 45 countries. There is no certainty that the process can be replicated for the remaining 121 countries.

48. Clearly, trust funds with one-off contributions by a few donors are not adequate. To be effective in gender mainstreaming, UNDP should allocate sufficient funding from core resources for staffing, training and programmes, in addition to raising non-core funds.

Human resource policies

49. Ensuring gender equality within UNDP human resources is a related but different issue from 'engendering' UNDP programmes. Commitment to gender balance is part of the UNDP commitment to gender equality and indicates sincerity to its partners, but it is not gender mainstreaming. Resident Coordinators, Resident Representatives and their deputies are not held accountable for gender mainstreaming, and Resident Coordinators' competency assessments and annual performance reviews (RCAs) do not mention it. One Resident Representative reported that while he was judged on 'gender sensitivity' in the screening process, there was no follow-up thereafter.

50. UNDP has invested resources, promoted policies and monitored progress towards gender equality within the organization. Despite some improvement,

women constitute only 26 percent of Resident Representatives and roughly 33 percent of senior management. The findings suggest that UNDP should explore the reasons for failure to hire, retain and promote women professionals.

51. The gender and diversity scorecard was launched in August 2004 to track the hiring and positions of women throughout UNDP and to monitor the progress of UNDP towards its goal of gender parity by 2010. The scorecard is much appreciated at country office and other levels, yet there appears to be no system of monitoring the resulting information, and there is little evidence that it influences recruitment decisions.

C. Gender mainstreaming in practice areas

52. While efforts to mainstream gender are ongoing in most practice areas, the evaluation findings suggest that UNDP has not fully succeeded in using a gender-analytical lens in its programmatic work at the country level. Few of the practice areas have a clear gender mainstreaming strategy, and there seems to be a lack of knowledge and conceptual clarity on how to apply a gender mainstreaming perspective among programme and project staff. There is little evidence of a systematic inter-thematic dialogue on 'engendering' the practices. There have been isolated efforts to address current gender issues; but the tendency is to seek small, women-focused activities that complement the mainstream rather than engaging in gender analyses that increase UNDP understanding or stimulate new approaches.

53. While those who have been trying to mainstream gender deserve credit, UNDP has not met the standards expected of a leader in development practices promoting international norms. Critical factors for consideration are:

(a) Does written guidance from BDP in all practice areas effectively incorporate gender considerations?

(b) Do global-level gender mainstreaming thinking and expertise reach and enrich practice in the field?

(c) Do key policy documents such as UNDAFs and CCAs reflect gender-based roles and women's needs? Does MDG monitoring raise gender issues, other than in MDG-3?

(d) Does practice in the field reflect understanding of gender?

(e) Are offices making efforts to remove the gender bias embedded in standard practice?

(f) Do research and programming respond promptly to the gender implications of emerging issues?

54. Ideally, gender mainstreaming across all the practice areas would include: developing a fundamental understanding of a development problem through recognition of men's and women's socially-prescribed roles; recognizing ways in which gender discrimination impedes progress in achieving social and economic goals; and developing techniques to break down gender barriers..

Poverty reduction

55. The evaluation found that where there is attention to gender, it tends to emphasize only women-focused activities; and that there have been many missed opportunities to approach poverty reduction in a strategic way. Despite some important initiatives, the evaluation found that inclusion of a policy-level gender perspective in the poverty reduction practice area has been uneven.

56. Policy documents and guidelines describe gender equality as an integral part of pro-poor policies that is essential for reaching the MDGs, and point out the need for sex-disaggregated data. However, with few exceptions (such as a recent working paper, *Reorienting Development – Towards Engendered Employment Strategies*, February 2005), the links between gender inequality and poverty are not well elaborated. Nor do the documents and guidelines make clear how UNDP should modify analyses and policies from a gender perspective.

57. In recent years the gender unit and the Human Development Report Office, working separately or together, have undertaken most UNDP analytical work relating to gender and poverty reduction. There are some positive initiatives from the regional bureaux, such as the Asia Pacific Gender Equality Network, a programme in the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific that focuses on 'engendering' macroeconomic policy. The focus of most 'gender' work is on women. The result is that programmes and projects:

(a) assume that microcredit and training will raise women's incomes, make it easier for them to meet their practical gender-related responsibilities, and improve their bargaining power and status;

(b) support national anti-poverty programmes, especially those covering family health and children's schooling; and

(c) support social services, particularly health and education

58. Some programmes have taken a broader perspective. In India, UNDP has supported studies on gender and macroeconomic issues. In the Philippines, UNDP has supported gender and development guidelines. Several countries in the Asia-Pacific and Eastern European regions have used gender budget analysis to influence macro-economic policies.

59. At the country level, gender mainstreaming is most evident during PRSP formulation, work on indicators for the MDGs, and the preparation of national human development reports, but the analysis of economic data is not sufficiently 'engendered'. Most country offices have only limited expertise in gender and macroeconomics, which limits their effectiveness as advocates. Gender-sensitive budgeting provides an opportunity for dialogue that most countries have missed by confining those activities to the gender programme rather than mainstreaming them in poverty or governance.

Democratic governance

60. UNDP is recognized as having a comparative advantage in this area, since few other donors are as actively involved. There are a number of clear entry points for women's advancement and gender equality, such as citizen participation, accountability of government and protecting human rights.

61. The governance practice area and country programmes are visibly and explicitly working with and on behalf of women, and in certain cases apply a gender perspective, especially in some country programmes.

62. However, most programmes that explicitly promote gender equality focus on women running for political office or support for ministries for women. Among more strategic approaches, UNDP worked to mainstream gender in the Five-Year Plan of Egypt. In India, UNDP and UNIFEM partnered with women's rights advocates to ensure that gender is a central part of the Tenth National Five-Year Plan. In Swaziland, UNDP supported the 'engendering of the constitution, and the

involvement of women's organizations and civil society in assessing the draft constitution for gender sensitivity. In Kazakhstan, the human rights project has mainstreamed gender and set targets for long-term gender equality impact, as well as promoting human development courses at the university with a strong emphasis on gender. In the Philippines, UNDP has collaborated with UNIFEM to work with the justice system, including training trial judges and gender sensitization for the police. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there has been a project to facilitate implementation of a gender equality law. The UNDP programme in El Salvador started with the recognition that violence undermines the possibility for girls and women to be full and equal participants in society. The goal of the programme is to achieve a society without violence.

Energy and environment

63. UNDP headquarters provides some good approaches and strategies for gender mainstreaming in several sectors, and there are instances of good practice in country programmes. There is broad awareness that including women in programmes is necessary for the achievement of natural resource management objectives. Environmental protection projects offer opportunities for combating gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality, as in the Philippines and South Africa.

64. Again, opportunities in this practice area appear to have been missed. A number of countries reported local-level activities targeting women, but there is no evidence that gender issues are addressed at the policy level.

HIV/AIDS

65. HIV/AIDS is the newest practice area in UNDP. To be effective, HIV/AIDS programmes must view the relations between men and women as central to issues of prevention, protection and care. Yet the strength and emphasis of the AIDS programme directed from headquarters did not appear to be matched by work at the country level. The evaluation did not find an explicit gender mainstreaming strategy for the HIV/AIDS practice area.

66. The evaluation found some excellent programmes and good support from BDP, such as a global programme involving some 30 country offices. Such initiatives as the leadership development programme seek to address HIV/AIDS in a new way, incorporating awareness of gender issues. It was difficult to find evidence from other data sources – particularly the country studies – on the extent to which individual initiatives are being mainstreamed. While some projects addressed gender issues, others paid little or no attention to gender relations and gender equality.

Conflict prevention and recovery

67. Humanitarian efforts must take account of women's needs, but there are also crucial opportunities relating to gender equality, because during periods of conflict or crisis women step out of their traditional gender roles.

68. UNDP usually already has a presence in countries afflicted by natural disasters and is often the first agency present during or after a conflict; donors welcome UNDP to coordinate their programmes. This is a major comparative advantage.

69. So far, UNDP has not been a leader on gender and conflict. As a new practice area it does not yet have a defined gender strategy; but guidelines are in preparation to incorporate gender mainstreaming into all service lines.

70. UNDP could play a leading role in shaping an informed gender-mainstreamed approach to post-crisis development strategy.

D. Promoting gender equality

Advocacy and partnerships

71. The UNDP gender-mainstreaming mandate includes promoting gender equality. The extent to which UNDP country offices assume this responsibility, and how visible it is, varies considerably from country to country. In some countries, staff feel they lack the competence to promote gender equality. In others, UNDP has been able to take advantage of its opportunities, depending on countries' social and cultural characteristics and on political circumstances. In some situations there is a strong women's movement, and UNDP can offer support and legitimacy in relations with government: in others, it is better to work quietly.

United Nations gender thematic groups at the country level

72. The gender thematic (working) groups (GTGs) are key partnerships by which United Nations organizations can take joint positions and advocate for gender equality. This promising mechanism is not yet fully exploited. UNDP does not necessarily have to lead, but it should certainly support the groups and promote their establishment or revival in countries where they do not exist.

73. A number of UNDP country offices participate in GTGs. There are some successes: in Kazakhstan, the GTG worked together to write a gender MDG report. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, they produced a report on single-headed households. In India, they worked together to ensure that the UNDAF includes gender equality as the 'greatest common numerator'. In the Philippines, the team wrote gender-mainstreaming guidelines for the country, which were then adopted by the Government and its development partners. In other countries GTGs have been allowed to lapse. There have been efforts to revive the system; for example, in January 2005 an inter-agency group, led by UNIFEM and including UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, released a new resource guide for gender theme groups that has yet to be widely tested. The new manual should be helpful, but given the demands on people's time and the competing mechanism of knowledge management networks, the GTGs are likely to succeed only where there is leadership, or where incentives are provided.

UNIFEM and UNDP

74. In accordance with the terms of reference, this evaluation is limited to discussion of UNDP performance and is not an evaluation of UNIFEM. Its findings regarding UNIFEM are limited to what UNIFEM has done and can do to support UNDP's work. The evaluation looks at five points:

(a) The UNDP mandate for gender mainstreaming;
(b) The changed role and expanded approach of UNIFEM;
(c) Concurrent efforts to cut costs, and the resulting confusion in both organizations about institutional roles and relations;
(d) The current state of cooperation; and
(e) Recommendations for the future.

75. UNDP has its own mandate, and must take responsibility for mainstreaming gender into all its activities. The whole point of 'mainstreaming' is that working with and for women, working to achieve gender equality, is not a separate activity of

a women-focused institution such as UNIFEM. Rather, the expectation is that all social and economic development work by UNDP should purposefully take account of gender differences, and promote gender equality. The role of UNIFEM is defined in this context.

76. Successive General Assembly resolutions and Executive Board decisions have expanded the role of UNIFEM. It is now expected to bring together the United Nations system and NGOs; foster a multilateral dialogue on women's empowerment; work on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women; and stimulate cooperation between governments and civil society. In 2002 the General Assembly added HIV/AIDS, mechanisms to strengthen accountability for gender equality, and a focus on Africa. The General Assembly also encouraged UNIFEM to work with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to "ensure that the gender dimensions of all the international development goals are incorporated into the MDGs and the operational activities of the United Nations system".

77. Seeking rationalization and economies, UNDP leadership took the position that the gender mainstreaming machineries and resources already covered by UNIFEM were expendable. In 2002, UNIFEM was explicitly encouraged to expand partnerships and actions with UNDP, and in 2004 the UNIFEM Director was designated Special Advisor to the Administrator on gender, though so far without terms of reference. These decisions may have sent negative signals to UNDP staff, undermined the gender unit and advocates within UNDP, and encouraged the perception that UNIFEM could deliver gender mainstreaming for UNDP.

78. UNDP neglected to provide funding and technical resources for its own mainstreaming policy, and neither was UNIFEM funding increased in line with its expanded mandate. This has inevitably stimulated competition for resources between UNDP and UNIFEM rather than collaboration for action.

79. Country office experience has been mixed: although 70 per cent reported "effective or very effective" cooperation between the two organizations – and there are many examples of positive collaboration between UNDP and UNIFEM – outcomes in individual countries have depended largely on the personalities involved (see survey results, annex 1 of the unabridged report). Institutional clarity is sorely needed.

IV. Lessons learned

80. The evaluation concludes that UNDP lacks both the capacity and the institutional framework for a systematic, effective gender mainstreaming approach. Key shortcomings are:

(a) Gender mainstreaming has not been visible or explicit;
(b) There is no corporate strategic plan for putting the gender mainstreaming policy into effect;
(c) Steps have been simplistic and mechanistic; and
(d) UNDP has not acted on previous assessments identifying similar shortcomings, and has sent mixed signals about its commitment and expectations.

81. The initiatives that have shown results are scattered 'islands of success' that are probably not sustainable: they depend on individual interest and effort rather

than on a systematic corporate approach. What results UNDP has achieved have been based on convergence among the following elements:

(a) Strong commitment from management;
(b) A clear and proactive strategy and policy for gender mainstreaming;
(c) Qualified senior expertise to advise on gender mainstreaming within the country programme;
(d) Awareness of gender mainstreaming as a collective organizational responsibility;
(e) Systematic training in the gender mainstreaming concept, tools and issues; and
(f) Dedicated financial resources.

82. Other lessons learned fall into six categories: (a) leadership; (b) accountability and incentives; (c) understanding gender mainstreaming; (d) collecting information and sharing experiences; (e) financial commitments; and (f) institutional mechanisms.

Leadership

83. The accomplishments of some very committed individuals were constrained by absence of leadership at the higher levels. Top management should clarify what gender mainstreaming means for UNDP, and leadership must be complemented by mechanisms to institutionalize policy.

Accountability and incentives

84. It is not clear where accountability for implementing gender mainstreaming lies within UNDP. Since gender is a cross-cutting issue, the responsibility should lie with each individual, and then with heads of offices and bureaux. Top management should take ultimate responsibility and ensure accountability of individuals and units.

85. There should be accountability at the highest levels – for example, annual reporting to the Executive Board – and gender mainstreaming should be included in the RCAs of senior management.

86. Accountability should be accompanied by rewards and incentives. The considerable gender mainstreaming activity in UNDP must be recognized, rewarded, and promoted as an example to others.

Building understanding and capacity

87. Differing interpretations of the term 'gender mainstreaming' create confusion and impede progress. UNDP should define how the organization understands gender mainstreaming and proposes to implement it. Building the necessary capacity calls for additional specialized staff, and for training that addresses requirements in specific job functions and geographical situations.

88. Country-level capacity crucial for gender mainstreaming. GFPs often do not have sufficient expertise for their varied tasks. More use should be made of gender advisors at the regional level. Enhanced country-level capacity will allow UNDP to take a bigger part in donor coordination and establish stronger partnerships with civil society.

89. The gender unit at headquarters is understaffed, and its location – first within the poverty practice area and recently under the Director of BDP – does not help it influence the organization.

Knowledge management, dissemination and sharing of experiences

90. UNDP has missed many opportunities for learning, and there is little institutional memory or exchange of information. Gender analysis should be integrated into monitoring processes and evaluations to provide in-depth information. The addition of questions on gender for reporting on the MYFF is welcome; clear targets and benchmarks at programme and country levels will improve the usefulness of answers.

91. The GenderNet is a potentially valuable resource. However, it seems to be primarily used to ask and answer practical questions rather than to share experiences. A facilitator for the network would improve its usefulness.

Financial commitments

92. Resources are needed for training and building capacity, and for joint programming on gender equality. After a careful review of needs, UNDP should provide reliable, adequate funding and staffing for gender mainstreaming. Financial resources should be earmarked and traceable.

Partnerships and advocacy

93. The effectiveness of partnerships and advocacy varies from country to country, depending on individual skills and personalities. UNDP staff miss opportunities to promote gender equality because they are not clear what it means or how to do it. They are also unclear about how UNIFEM and UNDP share responsibility with other United Nations organizations for promoting gender equality.

94. UNDP should continue to work collaboratively with UNIFEM, but the UNIFEM role is to be the watchdog, advocate, and innovator: it has neither the scale nor the capacity to assume UNDP gender mainstreaming responsibilities.

95. At the country level, with few exceptions, it appears that the resident coordinator system, managed by UNDP, is underutilized as an opportunity to strengthen gender partnerships within the United Nations system. United Nations reform, the UNDAF and the MDGs offer opportunities for greater cooperation.

Institutional mechanisms

96. In the last five years, gender mainstreaming has lost visibility in the UNDP organizational structure. Now situated under the Director of BDP, it remains hidden from public view. UNDP needs a top-level unit to:

(a) provide visibility within and outside the organization;

(b) communicate that UNDP takes gender mainstreaming seriously;

(c) permit the development of cross-sectoral strategies, including human resources policy and corporate strategy;

(d) ensure accountability of individuals and units;

(e) monitor accomplishments; and

(f) facilitate the exchange of gender and development experience across regional bureaux, between headquarters and the field, and among country offices.

97. The unit should ensure that UNDP units and staff worldwide are aware of and equipped to handle new issues of gender equality, with more gender specialists to turn to for guidance.

V. Recommendations

98. Gender mainstreaming requires long-term commitment, consistent effort, and resources. In UNDP, success has been due to individual efforts rather than systematic approaches. UNDP needs:

(a) Proactive leadership and clear commitment to gender mainstreaming, with accountability and incentives;
(b) Clear articulation of its gender mainstreaming mandate;
(c) Enhanced capacities for gender mainstreaming, across the board;
(d) Stable, core financial commitments for gender mainstreaming;
(e) Strengthened partnership and clarification of the relationship between UNDP and UNIFEM; and
(f) An institutional structure to ensure all of the above.

Recommendations arising from this evaluation

A. Provide proactive leadership and reaffirm commitment

99. *The Administrator* should reiterate the commitment of UNDP to gender mainstreaming and reaffirm that gender has priority. The commitment should be matched with adequate resources. He should make a clear statement on the gender mainstreaming mandate of UNDP and the centrality of gender to human development and the mission of the organization; articulate a vision; and put forward a strategic plan with clear targets on how UNDP will accord renewed priority to gender and strengthen gender mainstreaming throughout the organization. The plan could introduce organizational targets, with incentives and accountability. Action points should appear in the new UNDP corporate gender strategy and action plan. The Administrator should also dispel any confusion that could have arisen from discussions about outsourcing the gender mainstreaming responsibility of UNDP to UNIFEM, and clarify how the two organizations will collaborate in future.

100. *UNDP senior management* at bureaux and all headquarters units and country offices should make explicit gender mainstreaming commitments, and set clear, time-bound and monitorable targets each year for their offices and individual work plans. Senior management should ensure that there is gender expertise in their offices; that staff are accountable, and that gender mainstreaming is a criterion in performance assessments.

101. *The Resident Coordinator* should exercise leadership in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), and ensure that MDG goal 3, 'gender equality', is properly addressed in the CCA/UNDAF, as well as in national poverty reduction strategies. The Resident Coordinator assessment and human resources capacity-building measures should assess and train for gender competencies. The UNDP Office of Human Resources (OHR) and the UNDG should cultivate the practice and monitor compliance.

B. Establish accountability and incentives

102. The RCAs of management staff should include gender mainstreaming performance targets and oversight mechanisms.

103. UNDP should establish a task force to produce a clear, realistic plan for adding RCA performance criteria and adjusting procedures. Gender mainstreaming work should be rewarded through the promotion and salary systems.

104. UNDP should create incentives to reward exceptional gender mainstreaming work by individuals or teams, such as a gender challenge fund or a gender award.

105. UNDP should monitor its gender balance targets, using, for example, the gender and diversity scorecard; analyze impediments; and take further actions in recruitment and the promotion of a culture of gender equality.

C. Retain gender mainstreaming programmatic strategy and gender-focused programmes

106. UNDP should retain and revitalize gender mainstreaming as a programmatic strategy to achieve gender equality. Gender should remain a 'driver' or cross-cutting tool mainstreamed across practice areas. UNDP should set monitorable targets to ensure accountability for implementation and the visibility of gender in each practice area. Targets and indicators should be set. These should be organization-wide (for example, number of staff trained; targets for core and non-core funds) and country-specific. Policy and programme design should incorporate gender analysis to ensure that they mainstream gender concerns.

107. UNDP should complement its approach with targeted initiatives to promote women's empowerment and gender equality at programmatic and institutional levels. Specific gender-equality programmes – some of them components of broader, more general programmes – are useful where national programmes with partner governments do not yet adequately address gender inequality.

D. Strengthen the institutional framework

108. UNDP should buttress the application of gender mainstreaming in its work. The organizational structure for gender mainstreaming in UNDP is inadequate and ineffective. The gender unit lacks capacity, resources and UNDP-wide authority to oversee and hold staff accountable.

109. UNDP should establish a corporate *Gender Development Office* within the Office of the Administrator or the Associate Administrator. Its work should continue at least until gender mainstreaming has demonstrable results and is internalized throughout the organization.

110. The head of the office should be a member of the UNDP management team. The staff should include at least four gender experts working systematically with internal partners such as BDP, OHR, headquarters units, regional bureaux and country offices. This office would be responsible for policy- and agenda-setting; and for strategic planning, coordination, overseeing and monitoring gender mainstreaming actions within UNDP, as well as for inter-agency cooperation on this theme.

111. UNDP should strengthen expertise in BDP by providing *technical gender specialists* for every practice area. Whether they work in the practice areas, in units or elsewhere; BDP should ensure close working relations with the Gender Development Office. The experts would provide technical support to gender mainstreaming in each practice area. They could be gender experts with knowledge of the practice area, or thematic experts with gender expertise, but provision of technical gender support must be part of the job description, not simply added to other responsibilities.

112. *Regional bureaux* should strengthen their gender expertise by recruiting regional experts and upgrading staff skills. This would enable them to exercise

effective oversight over the gender content of country programmes, assure the quality of implementation, and respond to the capacity needs of country offices.

E. Strengthen gender expertise in country offices

113. UNDP should place senior *gender development specialists in all UNDP country offices*. In small offices, the specialist could be funded jointly with other United Nations organizations and placed in the Office of the Resident Coordinator.

114. UNDP should strengthen the *GFP system*. GFPs, preferably senior staff with gender expertise, should have clear job descriptions and performance indicators, matched with allocation of time and resources. Acting as GFP should not be a spare-time or add-on task.

F. Strengthen gender mainstreaming capacities of all UNDP staff

115. Some gender expertise should be a requirement when recruiting new staff, especially programme staff, policy advisors and senior managers. The competency assessments of Resident Representatives and Resident Coordinators should include knowledge of gender.

116. UNDP should strengthen staff understanding of gender mainstreaming and its implications for their job. Training must be targeted, systematic and continuous. This evaluation recommends the following training:

(a) *All staff:* Basic sensitization to the importance of gender issues for the mandate and goals of UNDP, and the implications of gender equality at the personal and professional levels.

(b) *Programme staff and policy advisors:* Competence in gender and development, and in sector-specific gender analysis; familiarity with using gender analytical, planning and monitoring tools.

(c) *Middle managers:* Competence in organizational gender mainstreaming; gender issues in management; and gender-responsive leadership, including identifying and dealing with sexual harassment; competence in sector-, theme-, or region-specific gender and development issues.

(d) *Senior managers:* Competence in gender implications of UNDP mandate, targets and functioning, with emphasis on agenda setting; accountability; leadership, and advocacy for gender equality.

117. There should be a *systematic approach to knowledge management on gender mainstreaming*. UNDP country offices generate knowledge that could substantially strengthen its approach. Learning from past experience and sharing knowledge is crucial for capacity building within the organization. UNDP should document and disseminate experiences and good practices within UNDP, starting by archiving existing materials on gender mainstreaming in UNDP, linking up country offices and ensuring that they are accessible to different actors within the system.

G. Make adequate financial resources available for gender mainstreaming.

118. UNDP should allocate resources from its core programme and administration budgets to support gender mainstreaming work. Since core resources are limited, UNDP should resume vigorous fundraising for this purpose. Such dedicated resources should preferably be used for short- or medium-term actions and programmes with a catalytic or innovative role. They should not become the main source of funding for gender mainstreaming.

119. The evaluation recommends a special *corporate gender budget exercise* to determine what financial resources UNDP needs for gender mainstreaming.

120. UNDP should review the Atlas system to determine how effectively it records gender allocations and expenditures at the level of BDP, the regional bureaux and country programmes, and upgrade as necessary.

121. UNDP should use gender as a criterion for allocating TRAC-2 resources to country offices.

H. Clarify the relationship between UNDP and UNIFEM and strengthen coordination and collaboration.

122. Staff and stakeholders alike are confused about the relationship between UNDP and UNIFEM with regard to gender mainstreaming. UNDP should appoint a small working group to clarify and define cooperation with UNIFEM. Several internal assessments and discussions have already addressed the issue: the working group should seek fresh ideas from external sources and complete its task by June 2006.

123. The goal should be to define a relationship of mutual benefit based on a clear understanding of the different roles, mandates and comparative advantages of the two organizations. UNDP must reconfirm its commitment to gender mainstreaming at all levels, taking into account that its role is separate from and complementary to the role of UNIFEM as an advocate for women and incubator of new approaches to women's empowerment and gender equality.

I. Strengthen advocacy and partnerships

124. UNDP should strengthen its advocacy work and promote partnerships and networks within the United Nations system and joint programmes on gender equality at the country level. Given their Resident Coordinator role, UNDP Resident Representatives should provide leadership on gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system. Gender thematic groups should be established, encouraged or revived as necessary. Within the UNCT, UNDP should promote inter-agency joint financing of gender equality programmes and develop common strategies for gender mainstreaming.

125. UNDP should establish and strengthen networks with external partners for gender mainstreaming: with government partners; with civil society, including women's organizations, and with other donors. It should strengthen its capacity to tap into these networks and cultivate and utilize local gender expertise and capacity.

J. The Executive Board should promote accountability for gender mainstreaming within UNDP.

126. The Executive Board should monitor the extent and quality of attention to gender mainstreaming in country programmes and administrative budgets during the approval process, and take appropriate action as necessary.

127. Finally, the Executive Board should monitor the follow-up to this evaluation. UNDP should review its progress by 2008, and report to the Board.